

# Waste Tire Program eliminates illegal sites



The largest abandoned tire site in Sabine Parish contained approximately 400,000 tires. They were found in a pasture in 116 uniform piles.

DEQ's Waste Tire Program reports a 96% elimination of all reported illegal waste tire sites in the state. The other 4% will be disposed of in a short period of time. Any future illegal sites that may pop up will be relatively small, compared to the major dumps that proliferated in years past.

"We don't even get one a month anymore," according to Dennis Duszynski, director of DEQ's Waste Tire Program.

The clean-ups began in earnest with Act 185 of the 1989 Louisiana Legislature. It created DEQ's Waste Tire Program to eliminate the health hazards that abandoned tires posed to the public. Dumped tires attract mosquitoes, rodents and other pests that can be dan-

gerous to human health. Another hazard was tire fires, which are dangerous and very hard for fire fighters to extinguish. Act 185 banned whole tires from being placed in landfills and also established a \$2 waste tire disposal fee with each new tire purchase. The regulations took effect on January 20, 1992.

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At first, DEQ worked with local parishes through cooperative agreements. The parishes would identify illegal tire sites and accept competitive bids with tire processors. When the work was completed, DEQ would reimburse the parish. DEQ streamlined the system in 1998 by taking over the entire process. Since then, Louisiana's clean up of waste tire dumps has been rolling along smoothly.

The biggest site DEQ ever remediated was located in Sabine Parish. Dennis Duszynski recalls the site was in a large, overgrown pasture with an estimated 400,000 tires in 116 piles reaching 10 ft. high. "The Sabine Parish site was the first site the Department addressed without obtaining a cooperative agreement with the parish."

Some tire collectors created many tire dumps over the years. They would recruit "mom and pop" farms and pay them to store the tires for a short time. The collector would drop off five to ten thousand tires and then disappear,



A contractor cleans up an abandoned tire site.

leaving the farmer with the burden of the old rubber.

DEQ discovered these sites in various ways. "The majority of them were turned in by either the parish or citizens," Duszynski says. Sometimes DEQ personnel find them when they go out in the field for routine inspections. Once discovered, a new clean up site is added to the list.

At press time, there are only seven tire sites left that need cleaning in the state and eight others that are currently under remediation. Dennis says, "We've addressed the reported sites and we're pretty much done."

The Waste Tire Management Fund will continue to pay for the costs of disposing of newly-generated waste tires and for research and development. The tires from dealers and gas stations will be shredded and reused mostly for civil engineering projects throughout the state. The four-inch by four-inch rubber squares can be used for lightweight back fill or for slide and erosion control.

DEQ's Waste Tire Program will now concentrate on making sure that used tires are put back into use by recycling and addressing any new tire sites that are found.

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work activities; it is targeted for completion by the end of this year. By creating this system, DEQ will be the first such agency in the United States to have the ability to supply their employees with this type of information.

GIS provides an invaluable service to DEQ. GIS employees strive to produce an accurate product so others can do a good job. Paul said, "This kind of work is extremely challenging and we're very fortunate to have the support of the

Secretary, Undersecretary and the Information Technology Director. We have a lot of fun performing our work because technology is changing all the time. There is never a dull moment. We learn something new every single day."

